DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 188 EA 011 466

TITLE	Managing Community School Centers. #3 in a Series of 6 Booklets.
INSTITUTION	Educational Facilities Labs., Inc., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	32p.; For related documents, see EA 011 464-469 ; Photographs and some small print may not reproduce clearly
AVAILABLE FROM	Educational Facilities Laboratories, 850 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022 ($1.50, quantity discounts; $6.00 for series of Nos. 1-6)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Organization; Building Operation; Community Involvement; *Community Schools; Delivery Systems; Elementary Secondary Education; Interagency Cooperation; *Interagency Coordination; *Management; *Neighborhood Centers; Planning; School Community Cooperation; *Shared Facilities; Shared Services; Social Services

ABSTRACT

This booklet is the third in a series that examines community school centers. A variety of strategies that have been developed for managing community school centers are examined. Four aspects of management are discussed: (1) setting up an organizational structure that establishes relationships among participants; (2) ways of making the structure work; (3) managing the center's facilities; and (4) funding for administration, programs, and operation and maintenance. (Author/MLF)

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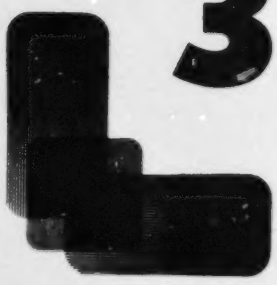

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EA 011 466

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community school centers have evolved from many experiments in interagency cooperation and community involvement. One line of descent has been from the community education movement, which has long advocated that schools assume a leading role in expanding and coordinating community services and that education itself be broadly inclusive of all age groups, subject matter, and experience. Another line of descent has been from the parks and recreation fields which pioneered in developing park-schools as coordinated facilities and sites, with shared responsibilities in recreational programming. A third line of descent has been in the movement for citizen participation in government and planning, for which citizen activists and enlightened government officials are due credit.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which supported the preparation and publication of this series of reports on community school centers. The foundation has long been in the forefront of the community education field and has supported and encouraged community participation and community-based solutions to social problems.

Sincere thanks are due to the planners and participants in over 70 community school centers across the country who have shared with us their experiences, hopes, frustrations, and knowledge. Without this front-line reporting, this series would not be possible. We also thank the individual experts who provided advice and knowledge, and who read and reacted to early drafts.

Major responsibility for researching and writing this series was taken by EFL's Ellen Bussard.

EFL is a nonprofit organization that researches, publishes information, and provides services on facilities for "people serving institutions." Programs are supported by grants and contracts from foundations and government agencies.

Copies of this series
of publications
are available from EFL
850 Third Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

First Printing January, 1979
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COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

FOREWORD

Our society is in the midst of change and challenge:

- The make up of our population is shifting, in that there are fewer school-age children, more elderly people, more working mothers, and more people retiring before age 65 and seeking "something to do."
- Ordinary citizens are seeking a greater role in determining our own collective future.
- We are becoming aware of the value of recycling and preserving community resources rather than laying waste and starting over.
- Continuing fiscal crises are challenging public institutions to seek ways of providing services for less money through more intensive use of available resources and cooperative planning.

Community school centers stand at the crossroads of these trends. Whether housed in recycled school buildings or in new facilities cooperatively planned and financed, these centers are becoming a focus of community and neighborhood life. These centers may include libraries, health clinics, elementary or secondary schools, swimming pools and other recreation facilities, day care centers, senior citizen services or other people-serving agencies. They may also be places where community organizations, social clubs, and union locals hold regular meetings and special events. In some, families and friends gather for reunions and baby showers. In common, they may be described as "people centers"; they provide a focus for community life.

This booklet is one in a series that examines community school centers as a phenomenon of national importance to the coordinated delivery of social services, better use of public resources, and revitalization of community life. ■

1 **A Concerned Citizen's Guide to Community School Centers**

2 **Planning Community School Centers**

3 **Managing Community School Centers**

4 **Facility Issues in Community School Centers**

5 **Using Surplus School Space for Community School Centers**

6 **A Resource Book on Community School Centers**

MANAGING COMMUNITY SCHOOL CENTERS

INTRODUCTION

Managing a community school center is more complex than managing a single agency facility because of the unorthodox features of these centers, such as:

- a wide variety of agencies, organizations, and individuals participate on a more or less equal basis
- agencies that usually function independently coordinate programs and services
- users extensively share spaces and operating expenses
- centers have to be committed to flexibility and change in programs, participating organizations, and allocation of spaces to meet changing needs.

The school and other agency participants of a community school center are used to working within their own organizational structures with their own goals, priorities, budgeting procedures, and bureaucratic regulations. Thus, people from one agency may find it difficult to work closely with other agencies and organizations. Professional staff may find it bewildering to work with community residents who do not understand the institutional constraints under which they work. And, community residents may feel that professionals are more committed to agency goals than to community needs.

By its nature, a community school center is not a static institution. Although the basic outlines for management can and should be established during the planning stages, management is an active process. Only after the center has been operating for a while will the implications of planning decisions become obvious. Then, it may be necessary to renegotiate some earlier agreements.

Coordination among the users of a center not only has to be created, it also has to be maintained. And this requires active and flexible involvement of all participants. Management has to be able to accommodate changes in community needs and resources, changes in program, changes in participating organizations and agency personnel, changes in funding levels, and so on.

There are no standard procedures for managing community school centers. Administrative systems differ, just as the design and services of these centers differ to reflect the needs, resources, and political realities of different communities.

This booklet will examine a variety of strategies that have been developed for managing community school centers. We will discuss four aspects of management:

- setting up an organizational structure that establishes relationships among participants
- ways of making the structure work
- managing the center's facilities
- funding for administration, programs, and operation and maintenance. ■

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Organizational structure

Organizational structure describes the relationships among participants in centers. A good structure should:

- clearly spell out the responsibilities and rights of all participants
- provide a mechanism for making decisions on fiscal, program, staff, and facility issues
- provide a mechanism for dealing with change
- allow all participants to contribute their views
- provide a mechanism for resolving disputes
- be supported by all participants.

The structure should facilitate achieving the goals of the center and should not be an end in itself. The process of creating a structure is often as important as the final structure, because it requires that clear understandings be reached by all interested parties.

The complexity and nature of organizational structure varies widely among centers. It may rest simply on a verbal agreement, or be described in a brief letter of agreement signed by several parties, or it may be detailed in a 10-page document.

Management structures reflect the philosophy and goals established in the planning stages of a center and often reflect the makeup of the planning committee. Managerial leadership may be exercised by agencies joint community and agency councils, or community councils.

Legal background

Because municipalities and school districts are separate entities which derive their authority from the states, state laws govern all cooperative arrangements.

The laws differ widely in the degree to which they address cooperation among municipalities, school districts, and private agencies. The circumstances under which laws were written, amended, and interpreted have not, for the most part, anticipated school, agency, and municipal cooperation of the sort appropriate to community school centers.

Many newly-constructed centers are administered formally by the local board of education. This is so for a number of reasons:

- education is usually the single largest function of the center
- board of education funds, bonds, and state aid for schools are usually the major sources of construction funds
- school boards are empowered to raise funds only for schools
- school boards are legally responsible for activites taking place in schools.

Although most state laws allow schools to be used for a variety of community uses, specific uses are left to the discretion of the school board and the building remains under the board's supervision. And although the terms used in law, such as "public school purposes," "civic purposes," and "educational purposes," are now broadly interpreted, administrative control remains with the school board.

In centers where the school board retains legal authority, there is often a discrepancy between the formal legal structure and the way the center actually operates. The written version tends to be very conservative, while in practice the administrative powers are shared with agencies and community representatives through advisory councils. However, the school board retains veto power and legal accountability.

In communities where schools are built with municipal funds and the schools are a department of municipal government, joint municipal-school administrative arrangements can be fashioned more easily. Sometimes this is done through a legal agreement; other times it can be accomplished by shifting budget allocations among municipal departments.

If a facility can be divided into distinct school and community service areas, administrative authority may also be divided. At the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Community High School and Neighborhood Facilities Center in Baltimore, for ex-

ample, the community service wing and functions are under the jurisdiction of the mayor's office, while the rest of the center is under the jurisdiction of the education department.

Some new centers are legally administered by community councils, or joint community and agency councils. In these cases, state laws usually were changed to allow joint governance.

Many states' laws are being changed to allow for more complex administrative mechanisms to accommodate the increasing number of schools that are now being reused or shared for other types of occupancies.

Centers located in buildings that no longer house active school functions have a wide variety of management structures. Some are run by a city or a municipal recreation department. Others are run by citizens committees. Still others are managed by nonprofit organizations that may be formed specifically for that purpose. Usually the building is leased or sold by the school board or transferred to municipal ownership.

Center leadership

Leadership of a center can be taken by one or more agencies, a coalition of agency and community representatives, or a council of community residents. The leaders have the responsibility for determining a center's policies and overseeing its operation.

Agency leadership By far the most common form of management structure is agency leadership. This is because agencies already have the resources—money, staff, organization, experience, and political clout—to operate a center.

Agency leadership may be through a single agency that owns and operates the center. Usually, in new centers, this agency is the school board. If the community center is near but separate from a school, the governing agency may be a neighborhood development corporation, as in Philadelphia. In Atlanta, the Department of Human Resources manages several centers located next to schools. Centers established in buildings no longer used as schools frequently are managed by an agency other than the school board.

Two or more agencies may operate a center by dividing program, administration, or spatial jurisdictions. For example, at the Quincy Community School in Boston, the school board runs the school, the community school council runs the community school programs, and the health clinic and little city hall operate independently. There is no formal or legal structure tying these programs together. The coordination and cooperation result from the goodwill of the staffs.

Two or more agencies may also jointly operate a center. In Arlington, Virginia, the county schools and county Department of Environmental Affairs share the responsibilities and program planning of the Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Community Center. In Atlantic City, a consortium of the city, the school board, and a quasi-public human services agency jointly operates two centers, and jointly decides on all policy matters. All three partners have the right to operate their own programs in the centers.

Agency leadership of centers may or may not allow the community to contribute to planning or governance. Although centers with agency leadership may have community advisory councils, the councils vary considerably in the roles they fill and the effect they have on a center's governance. Because decision-making authority is vested in one or more agencies, there is always the possibility that community participation will be sidestepped. The degree of community participation depends on the willingness of the agency leaders to seek it and the persistence of the community to offer it.

Joint agency and community leadership Only a few centers are legally governed by a council jointly representing agency and community people. This is because it is difficult to establish such a

Everyone shares in administration of Vancouver center

The architectural program and administrative structure of the Britannia Community Service Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, were planned by a committee of community, government, and school representatives.

The committee, with the aid of a consultant, decided that the goal of integrated delivery of community services could best be achieved by not having a single agency assume administrative leadership. A joint community and agency form of administration was developed.

The Britannia Society was established as a nonprofit organization supported by city funds, with free membership for all community residents. Under the auspices of the society, a 15-member board of management governs the Britannia Centre. Ten members of the board are elected from the society and five members represent agencies operating in the center.

The board of management is legally responsible for identifying community needs and making plans to meet them, for contracting for services with agencies such as the library board and the parks board, for coordinating agency programs and initiating programs for which there is no responsible agency, and for administering the daily operation of the center. The board delegates daily operations to an administrative staff of 30, and supervises programs through subcommittees.

In order to develop this system, changes had to be made to the provincial Public Schools Act, which otherwise would have given the school board controlling power over the community activities in the center.

This joint administrative system costs more than a traditional agency administration. (A 1973 analysis of proposed models estimated the extra cost for community-managed administration, with a staff of 6, at $35,000 per year. The staff is now much larger, but the staff requirements and cost for the other types of proposed models may have been similarly underestimated.) Nevertheless, Britannia's integrated services and complicated patterns of space sharing and program cooperation would not be possible without this system. All agencies were required to make major shifts in their normal operating procedures, which caused stress within each agency. However, after two years operation, people are enthusiastic about the arrangement.

Although developing this kind of "mature relationship" requires a great deal of tolerance and hard work on the part of all participants, the people involved feel that it is the best way to achieve a flexible community-oriented service center.

The board has shown unusual awareness of the importance of its administrative system by commissioning a study to evaluate it. The two unresolved issues raised by this study are the great amount of time and effort required of community board members, and the problems of agency directors who must function within their own agency's hierarchy and also be part of the center's governing board.

Sharing also works in rural communities

Another type of agency and community governing system developed in Sturgis, Michigan, where, in a rural town of 10,000 there is not a great deal of difference between "agency people" and "community people." There is no single community school center. The community school programs use a variety of locations and resources, including schools and a private camp.

The community schools' governing council is authorized by an agreement among the city, the schools, and any other townships that wish to join. Membership consists mostly of official representatives from the municipalities and the school system, but includes appointed community representatives as well, and the "official" representatives see themselves also as community residents.

structure, and laws may have to be changed.

Shared leadership runs counter to the normal or traditional ways in which agencies deliver services and people receive them. A move toward shared power may be resisted by agency people already in power. Before the concept can be established it needs strong community pressure and support of key government people.

Centers in converted schools often have a joint agency and community governance, although the group holding title to the property often retains ultimate responsibility. For example, a center operating in an old schoolhouse in Concord, Massachusetts, is managed jointly by a citizens committee, the town manager, and the head of the recreation department. However, because the building is owned by the town, the town manager has final authority.

Community leadership Citizens councils rarely have total responsibility for managing, programming, staffing, and operating a center. Unlike government and school agencies, these councils usually have few resources. When city funds, school funds, or park department funds are used to support a center, each agency usually retains some control. Community control is most likely to occur in a center located in a surplus building that derives a major share of its funding from rents and user fees.

Community control puts the burden on the community council to find agencies interested in participating in the center. In Boston this has resulted in centers independently, or in cooperation with private agencies such as the Boys Club, organizing and running recreation programs in which the city recreation department does not participate.

A drawback to this independence might be that the council loses the resources that city agencies can mobilize. However, the feeling in Boston is that participation by city agencies would lessen community control and could lead to agency domination.

Unfortunately, programs controlled by a community may be more vulnerable to budget cuts from city hall. The Boston system has lost nearly 50 percent of its city allocations in the last several years. If it lacks agency participation, and therefore agency constituents, this kind of system requires development of grassroots political power.

Boston gives the money and the responsibility to communities

The Boston Community School program comes very close to total community control. It is funded directly by the city as a separate city department. (The regular school program is unrelated to the community school program which operates mostly during non-school hours.)

Each community school center is governed by a council of community residents who are elected or self-selected. The council is responsible for defining community needs, establishing the scope of programming, hiring staff, and allocating funds provided by the city. It may also seek additional funding from private sources and other government agencies. (More than half of the Quincy budget is from outside sources.)

The central administration office provides technical assistance and guidance to each council, but scrupulously attempts to avoid any semblance of control. A central board with representatives from each community council establishes overall policies on a city-wide basis.

Some of the Boston centers, such as the Quincy Community School, were developed through a long community organizing effort and now run comprehensive programs and services. Others were established in neighborhoods with no history of community activism and little internal coherence. Such centers have fairly rudimentary programs, but they are helping their communities to develop awareness and self-determination in a way that no program delivered by outside authorities could.

Advisory councils

Advisory councils can play a major role in managing community school centers. Their role is advisory and they do not have any direct authority over program, personnel, or fiscal matters.

However, they function as adjuncts to an agency or a consortium of agencies that hold decision-making powers. The influence of an advisory council is therefore dependent on the agency's willingness to seek council advice.

Active agency and community advisory councils

The School Cabinet of the New North Community School in Springfield, Massachusetts, although advisory, effectively functions as the governing body while the school board, which retains all decision-making authority, reviews and monitors the cabinet's work. The cabinet includes representatives of all the agencies directly involved in the center (library, city, and school), community agencies such as the Spanish American Union, parents, students, and community members. The cabinet establishes policies, develops joint programs, resolves disputes, administers the center, and makes recommendations on hiring of key staff.

Atlanta has established a similar form of single advisory council in three neighborhood service centers run by the city. This council, which has strong policy making powers, consists of eight people elected from the immediate community, eight appointed by the mayor, and four elected from the tenant agencies. Mayoral appointees include factions unrepresented by elected members and politically-oriented people. Because each center has about 15 tenant agencies, the council would be too large or too unbalanced if all were represented. The four elected agency representatives report to the other tenants at interagency meetings. Although all advisory council suggestions must meet the approval of the Atlanta Department of Community and Human Development, they have rarely been rejected.

Active advisory councils share two characteristics:

- they include participating agencies and community representatives
- they initiate policies and programs, and advise on hiring of key staff.

The agency with legal decision-making authority, which may also be an active member of the council, reviews council decisions but rarely uses its veto power.

Advisory councils with only community people tend to be less actively involved in managing centers than councils with both constituencies. There are several reasons for this:

- they are expected to review policies and programs rather than to initiate them
- because actions can be taken without advice from the advisory council, advice is often not requested
- there is frequently no suitable mechanism for involving the council on issues
- as time goes on, the agency and council members become increasingly less clear about what the council's role should be.

Many advisory councils that were active in planning a center disbanded after the center was operating because council advice was not sought on operation issues.

Occasionally, community advisory councils that are given powers to "assist," "advise," and otherwise participate in formulating policy are nevertheless asked to perform quite a different role. They may be expected to be cheerleaders, fundraisers, and pacifiers of public discontent, while the real business of setting policies and running the center is carried out by the school and other agencies.

It is worth noting that some community people do not seek control or final decision-making power. They may prefer only to give advice or to

be kept informed of the alternatives under consideration and the reasons for decisions. Some people in every community will always feel more comfortable in an advisory capacity. If most people in a community identify with the administrative and government authorities and trust their ability to work for community needs, a community advisory council may be adequate. If community people distrust the people in positions of authority, they will seek more formal powers.

There are councils that have important functions and councils with peripheral functions. The degree of formal documentation and organization of a council is not always correlated with its actual role. In some instances, elaborately constructed advisory councils have little influence. In other instances, considerable community participation takes place without any formal structure.

In general, advisory councils can play an important role in keeping the operations of centers oriented toward their users, and in maintaining a partnership between community people and agencies in leadership roles. However, this partnership rests on personal relationships and it is vulnerable to changes in political climate and personnel. The organizational structure, by itself, does not assure community participation.

Regional systems

When a community embarks on a system of community school centers it will face management issues on the service areas of its centers, the degree of central control or local autonomy, and the location of centers.

In a city, the geographic focus of each center is likely to be the neighborhood. People living in a neighborhood will be expected to patronize the center in their neighborhood.

Ideally, each neighborhood center should provide services and facilities that reflect that neighborhood's needs. Key management questions are how to equitably allocate resources from a central source to neighborhoods that have different levels of needs and resources, and how much coordination to offer at a central level.

In Boston and Washington, D.C., each center is alloted the same amount of money from a central office. The decision on the best way to use the money is made at the local level in Boston by the community board, and in Washington by the advisory council and center director. The central coordinating office provides training, technical assistance, and guidance. The central office requires only a minimal degree of fiscal accountability from each center. In Boston, the local council may also seek outside funds, which need not be reported to the central office.

Few cities can afford to develop centers in all their neighborhoods. Therefore a major decision at the central level is where to locate centers; Boston and Minneapolis have each adopted different strategies.

In Boston, the community school system was developed along with a major school building program. All schools constructed after 1971 were designated as community schools and designed to include community facilities. Location of the centers was determined at a central office, for reasons tangentially connected with neighborhood needs. Some parts of the city have several centers and others have none. Because current plans do not include any new building, or conversion of existing schools for community use, the Boston system is essentially completed.

Minneapolis centers are developed in response to requests from neighborhoods. The central community education office encourages neighborhoods to mobilize, form a council, and approach the central office with a program and a list of needs. The central office is basically a resource, and the only aspect which has been systematized is the process by which local neighborhoods get access to that resource.

In city-wide systems that are neighborhood oriented, the central office must tread a fine line

between offering guidance and coordination and being perceived as trying to exert control. Often another level of coordination develops when local centers meet with directors, citizens, and agency people from other centers to share information, ideas, and solutions to problems. In Boston, a city-wide council representing each neighborhood council establishes overall policy.

In rural, suburban, and small town communities, the geographic focus is likely to be the whole region or town instead of a neighborhood. In those systems the services and facilities may be specialized at any one center, but comprehensive when all centers are considered. People in the community are expected to attend whichever center is closest and offers the services they seek.

Needs are determined, and programs and policies are developed at the level of the entire town or region.

Structural relationships among participants

The formal structural relationships among participants affect the nature of services and programs, and influence the informal feeling of the center. These formal relationships differ among centers, and frequently differ among participants in the same center. Relationships are affected by several variables:

- the degree of responsibility each participant has for developing overall program and policy
- the degree to which all participants are equal or, alternatively, the degree to which there is an identifiable lead agency
- the length of commitment of each participant to the center, and vice versa
- the nature of the agreement between participants and the facility owner
- the relationship between the coordinator and each of the participants.

There may be a two-tiered organization that includes a few agencies as partners or major participants and other organizations as subsidiary participants. The major participants usually have open-ended substantial commitments to the center in terms of programming, space use, and policy formulation. The subsidiary participants usually have commitments of shorter duration, and less responsibility for a particular program and space use. They may or may not have any say in the overall program and policy development.

The two centers in Atlantic City are organized in this way. Three agencies, the city, the school system, and Atlantic Human Resources, Inc., are partners with responsibility for the centers, and each has the right to use all the centers' facilities for programs. Other agencies and groups apply to the partners to conduct programs for a specified length of time, and do not have any general responsibilities. For example, the Opportunities Industrial Center has a yearly contract to conduct an arts and crafts program for senior citizens, but OIC does not participate in establishing center policies.

A center that is organized cooperatively among a limited number of partners, such as the county and the school system of Arlington, Virginia, tends to place a high degree of collective responsibility with the partners. The partners usually have long-term commitments and broad agreements.

Centers with a large number of participants, such as the eighteen or so agencies in Atlanta's John F. Kennedy Center, may require less of each participant. At Kennedy, agencies do not have joint programming responsibilities, but carry out their own services independently. They have a landlord-tenant relationship with the center and their lease is subject to periodic appraisal. Often in this type of arrangement there is a lead agency that assumes responsibility for selecting tenants, thereby determining the center's scope of services.

There is great variability in the degree to which the community is considered as a participant, and in the way this is expressed. If the community is represented along with the agencies in a single advisory or governing council, it is more likely to be considered an equal participant in center affairs.

Making the structure work—people and programs

Whether a center works well or not depends on the personal relationships among the participants. The staff of a community school center will find itself in situations which require new role definitions, expectations, and responsibilities. Everyone from the agency head to the custodian to the school principal works differently than in a single purpose facility. The coordinator, of course, fills a role not found elsewhere.

The principal A community school center building is shared by the public, a staff whose primary focus is its own agency or group, teachers, and students. In centers where the principal is responsible for the overall operation, his or her responsibilities are entirely different than in a traditional school.

The community school center principal is more akin to a mayor or county executive. The facility he or she manages serves as a resource for everybody, not one narrow age group, while at the same time providing for the care and education of students. These centers tend to become involved with the families of their students more than traditional schools.

Principals have to be willing to accept the legitimacy of people from other areas of expertise, and people who are not "professionals" providing services and supervising programs in the center. This may be particularly difficult for principals accustomed to a hierarchical ranking system based on certification and graduate-school credits.

In some centers the principal is involved in the curriculum and the strictly educational side, while the coordinator assumes responsibility for other services and facility users. In other centers, the principal becomes more involved in interagency affairs and delegates curriculum development to teaching staff. Or, the principal may serve as the chief executive officer with two assistants, one in charge of curriculum and the other in charge of coordinating services. Usually, of course, the split is not clear cut. But it is obvious that the principal cannot fully take charge of all aspects of the center. The major adaptation principals have to make is to give up total control and share responsibility with other groups which previously have not "trespassed" on school territory.

Senior agency staff at a center Agency heads working in a center face a different challenge. Unless they are from agencies with a tradition of independent branch officers, such as a library, the degree of autonomy they need to function effectively is probably more than their agency usually grants. In order to coordinate services and work cooperatively with other participants, the senior person from each agency at the center needs a fairly large degree of autonomy over the staff from the same agency who are working at the center, and over his or her agency's funds and other resources. If the agency was not aware of that requirement during the planning stage, and is not willing to change its policies, the agency representative will often be caught in a bind between agency regulations and the expectations of the center.

For example, if the agency is unable to commit a fixed amount of money to the center's operation, the agency director at the center won't know what resources are available and if the funding fluctuates, the director's ability to fulfill commitments will be compromised.

Agency people are also under pressure to maintain their visibility within the center. They must be able to delineate their accomplishments in order to improve their own position within their agencies and justify agency expenditures.

Senior agency staff are in a different position from principals who usually have less control than in a normal school but still work within a familiar context. Agency personnel frequently have more autonomy than usual, but work within a context quite foreign to their regular bureaucracy.

The coordinator Coordinators have a hybrid role that is both extremely important and ex-

tremely delicate. It is important because much of the success of the center depends on the ability of the coordinator to get a wide variety of people working together to develop programs and solve problems. It is delicate because, despite the great responsibility, the coordinator usually has no direct leverage over center participants and must rely on goodwill and persuasion.

The coordinator's position can be located almost anywhere within an organizational structure. The coordinator can be responsible to the school principal, the school superintendent, the mayor, the municipal recreation department, a governing council, or some combination of these. Whatever the organizational structure, it is crucial that the coordinator's responsibilities are to the whole center, and not to one agency. The agency that pays the coordinator's salary must be prepared to grant him or her a great deal of autonomy. Credibility with all participants rests on an ability to convincingly argue for the good of the whole center, which might be weakened if the coordinator also has program responsibilities for one agency.

In all centers, the major and most difficult function of the coordinator is to promote cooperation among participants. Agencies, if left alone, tend to go about their own business in isolation, even if they believe in cooperation. The coordinator must repeatedly identify opportunities for sharing resources and working together and must repeatedly convince people that it is in their best interests to do so. This requires meetings at all levels—with senior agency people, from headquarters and the center, singly and in groups, and with community people.

Promoting cooperation spans a range of activities, sharing a coffee machine or photocopying machine, sharing one group's special resources, allocating space, or defining program turf.

Other functions of the coordinator vary with the organization and goals of each center. They may include:

- finding programs and agencies for the center
- maintaining liaison with community groups and service agencies
- establishing and overseeing programs sponsored by the center itself
- scheduling space uses and resolving conflicts
- publicizing the center
- seeking outside funds
- planning cooperative programs with groups at outside locations
- taking charge of building security
- accounting for expenses.

Support staff. Sharing space, long operating hours, heavy use of facilities, and differing needs of many users are all characteristic of community school centers. The support staff—maintenance, security, and clerical—should understand these characteristics and subscribe to the goals of the center.

Unfortunately, support staff often receive conflicting requests from different people. At the Britannia Centre in Vancouver, maintenance people have been responsible to both the school principal and the center director. A recent management study identified this dual responsibility as a source of friction and recommended that the maintenance staff be responsible to only one person.

Staff selection

Although most agency staff are selected by their own agency to work at a center, it is important that the individuals want to work there. Arbitrary assignments of staff will lead to problems.

Because of the coordinator's unique role as liaison among all agency and community people, more open selection procedures are necessary. Some centers allow the community to participate in selecting a coordinator. In centers directly managed by a community council or a joint community-agency council, the council selects the

coordinator. Community participation is then inherent through council representation.

In centers where one agency, usually the school system or the municipality, hires the coordinator, the community advisory council may also interview candidates and make recommendations.

Agency and community select coordinators

In Atlantic City, the coordinator is hired by the school system. The school administration screens candidates and selects three or four finalists. When the first coordinator was hired, the finalists were interviewed and ranked separately by the community advisory council and by the three partner agencies. School administrators were greatly relieved to find that agency and community rankings were identical. As community people and agency people have come to trust one another, the review process has been consolidated. Candidates are now interviewed and selected jointly by agency and community representatives.

At the New North Community School in Springfield, the coordinator is also hired by the school district. The school cabinet, which includes representatives of all participating agencies, teachers, parents, and community, appoints one or two people to the school district's screening committee.

Centers conceived more for consolidation of services by established agencies than for local community determination of needs and programs often allow for agency review of candidates, but not for community review.

A few locations have a review procedure allowing the community to participate in selecting a school principal similar to that used in selecting a coordinator.

Staff turnover Staff turnover can be particularly disruptive in a community school center because participants work in close cooperation, jurisdictional lines get blurred, and new institutional relationships are constantly being developed. However, the important factor in coordination is the personal relationships that develop among representatives of different agencies. When these individuals change, the institutional relationships have to be developed again. A clear organizational structure spelling out rights and responsibilities of participants can help smooth the transition period.

Again, because of the special role of the coordinator, a change in that position is potentially more disruptive than other changes.

Personnel changes outside the center—particularly heads of agencies—can also affect the center's operation. A new school superintendent, recreation director, mayor, health agency director, or director of a community organization may challenge or change agreements made by their predecessors on program, staff, and financial commitments to the center.

This is a hazard inherent in a cooperative venture between independent agencies and organizations. However, clearly stated agreements between agencies will help new agency directors know what is expected of them.

Interagency councils

The most common kind of interagency council includes representatives of all tenant agencies, sponsoring agencies, and major user organizations. Interagency council meetings, or less formal but regular meetings of agency representatives, are the mechanism for developing day-to-day cooperation and coordination among participating agencies and organizations.

There are several purposes to these meetings:

- to inform each agency about the services and operations of the other organizations (particularly if they operate fairly independent programs)
- to enable staff people to know each other
- to identify areas of cooperation
- to develop the means for cooperative efforts

- to identify and eliminate gaps and duplication of services
- to deal with issues of the center as a whole, ranging from daily maintenance and operation to joint programming.

The degree to which the community school center functions as a center, rather than as the site of disparate agencies, depends upon the workings of this council and the interagency relationships it engenders. Cooperation among agencies depends on face-to-face involvement among agency staffs and their mutual understanding of agency programs. This process is not spontaneous and requires concerted effort to become effective.

Interagency councils, or their equivalent, usually function in addition to governing councils or advisory councils. In a few centers one single council of all the agency, organization, and community representatives serves all functions.

A clear distinction should be drawn between the functions of interagency councils, which essentially deal with the internal workings of the center, and the functions of councils which have policy-making powers to review and change the center.

For example, an interagency council should not have the power to decide which groups will become tenants. Successful centers find that more groups want to participate than can easily be accommodated. If the interagency council has the power to select tenants, it may be tempted to retain those already in the council. The council may be less likely to make changes that inconvenience members, such as shifting a group from single occupancy to shared occupancy of a space. These decisions deserve to be considered by the entire community of users.

Too often this distinction between interagency and governing councils is not made and interagency councils assume broader powers than they ought to have.

Resolution of conflicts

Tensions are inevitable in community school centers. Coordinated delivery of community services requires greater interdependency among agencies and organizations than is usual. Staff people must assume new roles, and openness to community participation attracts greater public scrutiny of operations.

Sources of tension It is possible to anticipate the sources of many tensions.

- Unequal resources. Organizations with few resources may expect greater contributions from those with more. Those with greater resources may be hesitant to make contributions that won't be identifiable on their own institutional balance sheet. Or they may expect to receive preferential treatment for their greater contribution.
- Sharing space. Disputes arise over the amount and priority of use, storage, equipment upkeep, etc., in shared spaces.
- New tenants or partners. Involuntary termination of programs, or bringing in new participants will upset existing relationships.
- Loss of identity. Some participants may fear that their organization will be swallowed up or taken over by the center. This fear may lead to an unwillingness to participate in coordinated efforts.
- Program areas. If several organizations provide similar services, tensions may surface over programmatic jurisdiction.

Resolving disputes The keys to resolving disputes are not special to community school centers, but are common to cooperative ventures everywhere.

- Agreement among all participants that the prime goal is the success of the center. Active community participation can be extremely influential in ensuring that this perspective is maintained.
- Willingness and ability to compromise in a spirit

of experimentation. This means that agencies must give their center staffs autonomy.
- Recognition that conflicts are an inevitable part of developing a center.
- Respect and tolerance for other people's goals and constraints. It is important to recognize that most participating organizations and agencies have institutional goals and constraints imposed from outside the center.

One of the major functions of the coordinator, interagency council, governing or advisory council is to identify the sources of tensions and to channel energies toward solving them.

It is helpful to have agreement on formal mechanisms for resolving serious disputes. However, when such a mechanism is in place, participants usually resolve issues among themselves before they become serious.

Coordinating programs and services

Centers usually set goals for the amount of sharing and cooperation they expect among participants. Some share policy and programming responsibilities, spaces and materials, services, staff, and even money resources. Others provide merely better coordination in the delivery of specific services, by specific agencies, in separate offices, with distinctly separate funding sources.

Factors influencing the degree of cooperation and coordination include:
- support for the concept from participating agencies at the planning stage and after the center is operational
- compatability of services
- accounting procedures
- allocation of spaces on a joint-use or single tenant basis
- fears of loss of identity or control on the part of agencies (willingness to assume joint identity)
- personal relationships among participants
- past experiences with attempts at coordination.

Cooperation, whether in the form of jointly providing a specific service or separately providing coordinated services, requires mutual respect and trust. There are a number of strategies for achieving coordination.

Dividing program and service responsibilities When several agencies in a center share broad service goals such as "providing recreational services to youth," each agency may be assigned responsibility for one or more components of the goals.

After the broad divisions have been made, each agency may operate its program independently.

City and volunteer agencies share recreation programs

In the New North Community School in Springfield, the recreation department and two community organizations share responsibility for running recreation programs. The North End Community Center runs programs in arts and hobbies; the Brightwood Youth Program runs a teen-age recreation center, a dance program, and volleyball program; and the city recreation department runs programs in swimming, karate, baseball, football, and basketball.

A similar arrangement is found in a few of the Boston schools which coordinate programming with youth organizations such as the Boys' Club and the YMCA. One organization may offer soccer and another football, or one may run girls' programs and the other boys'. In the Boston system, responsibility for programs is changed around among the organizations each year.

By concentrating on a narrower range of services, each agency may do a better job, knowing that other needs are being met by the other agencies in the center.

Case-by-case division of responsibility Centers providing numerous social services to individuals often find that agency jurisdictions overlap. Rather

than categorically define areas of responsibility, some centers divide responsibilities on a case-by-case basis and tailor several agencies' services to fulfill a particular user's needs.

Baltimore agencies share responsibility for clients

The Dunbar center in Baltimore attempts to coordinate the prime service responsibilities of each agency on a case-by-case basis. When a family seeks help from one agency, that agency finds out if the family has other needs. This information is given to the coordinator, who calls a meeting of all the relevant on-site agency heads. At this meeting, agencies are assigned to different parts of the family's needs. If two agencies have partial responsibility over similar service areas, the agency most closely associated with the area is assigned to the family. If a need is not clearly covered by an agency, the committee tries to bend the rules to help the family. If this is not sufficient, the coordinator, as the mayor's representative, assumes responsibility for mobilizing whatever outside resources are neccessary.

This system allows agencies flexibility to respond to varying workloads. Because no agency's jurisdiction is categorically limited, it is less threatening. However, this approach is also more time-consuming. With experience, the division of responsibility now done on an individual basis will become more systematic.

Jointly developing programs and services Instead of dividing programs and services into small pieces and assigning each to a different agency, it is also possible for agencies to jointly develop programs which are broader than any of them could offer alone. Staff time, space, equipment, funds, and other agency resources are pooled to support an effort which is jointly planned and carried out. This approach requires great flexibility by agency bureaucracies and people.

Schools and cities combine services

Vancouver's Britannia Centre provides coordinated library services for the elementary and secondary schools and for adults in a single library facility. The facility is designed for joint use and is staffed by school and city librarians who work as a team sharing the same workload and schedule. Although the two agencies' salaries and benefits are different, staff commitment and union sanction are making it work while differences are being resolved. The school and the public library both select books and other resources for the library.

Atlantic City also shares resources in jointly developed and mutually supporting programs. Separate health services are provided by the city health department and the independent social service agency (through federally-funded programs) in shared clinic spaces. Support for these services, and for school children's health needs, is provided by a city-funded medical laboratory in the facility. Swimming instruction for all the city's public schools is provided at the two community school centers, and the recreation department provides transportation.

On a smaller scale, participants in the New North Center in Springfield cooperatively offer a series of outdoor movies on summer evenings. The public library orders films, the school provides equipment, while recreation department staff supervise.

Development of services by the center When a center acts as a separate entity to develop services, it has greater freedom to respond to needs and is not limited to programs that existing agencies provide.

For this kind of development, the center usually incorporates as a nonprofit organization in order to receive and disburse funds. This arrangement puts community residents and agency staff on an equal footing as participants who are all individual members of the organization.

The Britannia Centre allows for center-developed services. When services are not available through one of the participating agencies, the governing board may develop programs with funds supplied by the city, it may seek outside funds for a specific project, or it may contract with another organization to provide a particular service.

If a center can develop programs of its own, it will have greater freedom to respond to needs and will not be limited to those programs which only existing agencies provide. ■

Managing the place

Managing a community school center requires skill with the whole facility when allocating spaces, handling the numbers and variety of people who use the center, and balancing competing needs.

Accommodating major users

Arrangements for accommodating regular major users of a center differ in:

- formality—from a simple verbal agreement to a formal lease
- single or multiple use of spaces
- full-time or part-time use
- whether an agreement is for a particular space or for accommodating a program.
- duration of the agreement.

Different kinds of agreements serve different purposes, and have their own advantages and disadvantages. For example, a 24-hour day care service would obviously require full-time use of part of a building, but it could occasionally share a gymnasium, and share a kitchen with others. A health care program operating several afternoons and evenings a week would not need full-time space, but might share a clinic with other health programs, as in Atlantic City. A conference room might be shared by all participating agencies. If two major agencies, such as a school and recreation department, are the prime participants in a center, they would probably agree to broad long-term agreements for sharing all recreation spaces. This agreement might be written or verbal, but would probably treat detailed arrangements as a mere scheduling problem.

The decision to grant major use of the facility generally goes through established organizational channels. For example, the cabinet at the New North Community School in Springfield, Massachusetts, makes recommendations to the school board, which reviews them and makes the final arrangement. In Boston, the community school council of citizens makes final decisions. In Atlantic City,

the three sponsoring agencies all have the right to operate any programs in any center space and jointly agree to any other major users. At the Britannia Centre, decisions are made by the governing board of community and agency representatives.

Accommodating non-regular users

Periodic and non-regular use of facilities for meetings, conferences and workshops, community events, and even family gatherings is a major function of many centers. The physical facilities are treated as a resource for many community uses and making them available is a center service. (At other centers, "services" mean only programs run by agencies.)

Many public schools have policies of eligibility and fee schedules for accommodating outside group functions. These criteria may, for example, rule out political or church-sponsored functions, allow use only by organized groups with their own liability insurance, or require written requests signed by at least three property owners.

While some centers adopt this approach, and indeed others may not accommodate non-regular users at all, many centers adopt a liberal approach to community use. They encourage any and all kinds of uses because they see the facility as a center of community life. This wide range of uses may include: **Meetings** of community organizations, school or municipal committees, fraternal, church and labor organizations, special interest clubs such as scouts, baton twirlers....**Public hearings**....**Workshops and conferences** such as in-service training, preparation for government job exams, employment, health, or consumer workshops, conferences of government, education, or social service agencies....**Community events** such as dances, dinners, talent shows, or other performances, political rallies, swimming parties, and fairs by organizations, churches, etc....**Private functions and special events** such as family reunions, baby showers, wedding receptions, rehearsal space for musical groups of a formal or informal nature, programs run by commercial organizations, and so on.

Centers with this kind of mission adopt application procedures with a minimum of red tape. The governing board or lead agency usually establishes policy for dealing with conflicting requests. It may be as simple as first-come, first-served, or it may assign priority to requests for public uses over private uses.

The degree to which a center accommodates periodic and non-regular users depends on its philosophy and goals. But it also depends on the kinds of spaces available in the center, the flexibility of those spaces to serve different purposes, conflicting programming, and the general level of demand. It also depends in part on the availability of other facilities in the community.

Scheduling for shared use

When shared space is a key feature of the center, the scheduling must be highly organized. One person, usually the coordinator, is responsible for all scheduling.

If demand for the space is high, turnover among groups should be efficient, yet enough time has to be allowed for setting up furniture and equipment. Little preparation is required for a swimming pool, but setup time is needed for gymnasiums, art rooms, or meeting rooms. If maintenance staff is needed to change equipment, the coordinator should schedule that as well.

Sharing facilities that are in great demand and are community resources in themselves, such as swimming pools, requires that choices be made between competing users. These are policy level decisions that should be set down as guidelines for the coordinator.

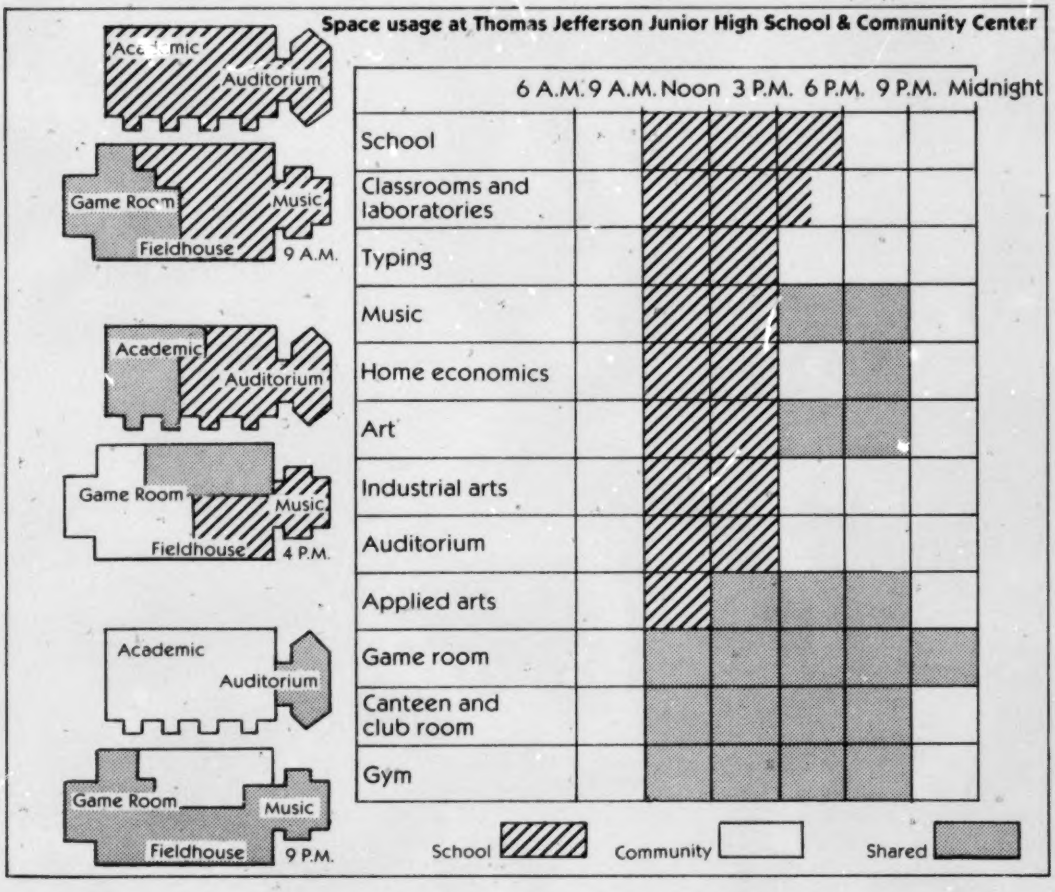
Centers vary in the kinds of uses they allow in shared facilities, and in the proportion of different kinds of uses. Major differences are found in the degree of :

- public use during school hours
- formal programs and courses, as opposed to casual use
- targeting special groups and population mixes
- variety in programming.

Public use during school hours All centers have policies assigning top priority to school use in shared spaces. Many interpret this as a blanket policy that no community use be allowed during school hours. Others are able to accommodate public use during school time without compromising school programs.

For example, one center reserves the auditorium for senior citizens before they are served lunch in the cafeteria and no assemblies are scheduled at that time. At the same school, all school home economics classes are conducted on four days and on the fifth day it runs an informal program for community women in the home economics classroom.

Another center opens its swimming pool to the community early in the mornings and at lunch time. In addition, one hour a week during school time is



reserved for senior citizens and another hour for mothers and children.

Formal programs vs. open time Some spaces tend to be scheduled mostly for structured class use and others for open time when anyone can use the facilities. For example, auto mechanics and woodworking shops tend to be used for classes, although a few centers with "open shop" time find that the demand is great. Other spaces, such as swimming pools, are mainly scheduled for open time, even though there is a need for formal classes for life saving or diving, and basic instruction for children who attend parochial and public schools without swimming pools.

Use by outside groups Although centers often allow youth groups to use center facilities, many centers do not set aside regular time periods for use of facilities (other than meeting rooms) by organized adult groups. Some feel that the community is best served as individuals and that allowing use by an employee group, for example, would be unfair. Some feel that the general demand is too great to justify granting any one group sole access.

However, periodic or one-time use may be encouraged for qualifying organized groups. If the demand is not overwhelming at certain times (for example, Saturday nights), gymnasiums, skating rinks, pools, and cafeterias could all be rented for a fundraising event or a private party. Few centers, however, follow this policy.

Special population groups Many centers schedule time for groups that need special attention and supervision, such as physically disabled or emotionally disturbed people. Some groups may have special time constraints; for example, a swimming class for mothers and infants is best scheduled when the mother's other children are in school. Senior citizens may prefer daytime activities over evening activities. Often, however, age is used arbitrarily to limit demand.

Providing security

Security is not a popular topic for public discussion, but it is essential in places that welcome the public and also insure the safety of students, the community, and property.

Four strategies are used, depending on the building design, degree of threat, and personal philosophy.

Limited access to portions of the building Parts of the building that are not in use are closed off. Whether this can be done effectively depends on building design and the extent to which spaces used by the public are clustered or scattered throughout the building.

Receptionist Visitors sign in at a reception desk, often a make-shift arrangement introduced after a center opens. The strategy is to keep track of who is in the building and where they are.

There are a number of variations. Users may have membership cards which they must leave at the desk on entering and retrieve when leaving. The sign-in procedure can regulate the number of people in each area of the building. The pool, for example, can be closed after the maximum number of people sign in with the pool as their destination. If all community services are located in one wing of a building, the receptionist can keep out students during school hours.

This strategy requires buildings designed for access through one entrance, which is often not practical. Someone has to be hired to supervise signing-in if the building is not designed with adjacent reception/administrative areas. The advantage of a receptionist is that he or she can welcome people and provide information, and some degree of control.

Non-uniformed patrol When building access cannot be limited, a patrol is often necessary. If the center's administration wants to appear non-

threatening, it may employ non-uniformed guards. (Occasionally they are undercover agents.) More often, though, guards wear blazers with badges on the pocket so they can be recognized by visitors seeking information or directions.

Uniformed patrol Where the potential for violence, theft, or vandalism is great, centers employ uniformed, and occasionally armed, guards. Their official visibility discourages crime and assures users of safety. ■

Assistant principal supervises security at night

Arlington has developed a hybrid system which draws on all of the security approaches. Sections of the building not in use are closed off and monitored by the public address sytem, connected to a monitor station. A night supervisor with the rank of an assistant principal patrols the halls, answers questions, helps user groups with equipment needs, and "does some counselling" with adult and university class registrants. Off-duty officers are hired for special events, under the supervision of the Youth Resources Officer.

Funding the center's operation

Analyzing the sources of funding for an entire center's operation is enormously complex for the following reasons:

- many agencies and organizations contribute to the operation of a center
- agency budgets may not reflect money contributed toward individual centers
- schools and municipal agencies often do not itemize the costs of employees' services for the center or use of resources, such as buses
- money may pass through many hands before it reaches the center, and it is difficult to know whom to credit
- the center does not have to prepare a detailed budget or accounting for anyone's review.

However, costs and funding sources can be examined in three categories: administration, programs and services, and operation and maintenance.

Funding administration

Administrative costs are the simplest to examine. Often the only identified administrative cost is the salary of the coordinator. At a large center, the salaries of an administrative staff and costs of office supplies and equipment may be included.

These costs are usually picked up directly by the municipality or the school district when they are major participants. If the officially designated center staff is small, additional support, such as secretarial services, is often hidden in the general administrative budget of the schools.

Sharing administrative costs is rare. However, in the Sturgis, Michigan, system the salary of the director is paid out of the community schools budget, which includes contributions from the city and the school district, the United Fund, and other sources. In Arlington, the "facilities manager" is a member of the school staff, and the "community facility coordinator," or programmer, is a member of the recreation department. Operating costs are paid by the Community Activities Fund, which is

appropriated by the county government and administered by the school board.

Only centers in surplus school space that have neither the municipality nor the school as major participants are administrative costs routinely prorated among tenants and other users.

Funding programs and services

Funds for programs and services may be patched together from many sources. These include agency resources, specific program funds from government and private sources, user fees, federal salary subsidy programs, and numerous small fundraising efforts.

Centers expect tenants and agencies that run programs to have their own sources of funding (state parole board, county welfare office, YMCA, etc.) or to raise funds, administer them, and hire and supervise their own staff. For example, the Family Counseling Services, Inc., in Atlanta puts together funds from private donations, United Way, and the city Department of Human Development to run a counselling service for Spanish-speaking families. South Side Day Care gathers funds from county, city, and federal sources.

Project or program funds are for specific well-defined projects of limited scope and duration. Separate funds are raised for each project or program, usually by an agency. If the center itself seeks and administers the funds, it must assume the overhead expense. And it must be incorporated as a nonprofit entity to receive funds and enter into legal contracts. Centers often look for grantsmanship skills in potential staff members.

Federal funds are available for numerous community service programs which also secure matching funds from other sources. The new Community Schools and Comprehensive Community Education Act of 1978 will provide additional funds for community services offered in community school centers. These funds, available through each state or directly from the federal government, can be used as the "non-federal contribution" required for federally-supported programs conducted as an integral part of a community education program.

Program funding is often available from state, county, and municipal governments, and from private sources such as foundations, corporations, and public charities.

Boston gets program funds from a variety of sources

Community schools in Boston receive "contract" money directly from the city for special staff and programs, as well as money for administration, maintenance, and operating costs. Community school councils that are incorporated may seek outside funding, and a few raise about as much money in this way as they are allotted from the city. For example, different councils now receive:

- *funds from the federal Community Development Block Grant program which are matched 3 to 1 by the state to run a day care program*
- *support from a major corporation for a photography course*
- *funds from the Boston Department of Elderly Affairs which, together with some of the "contract money," pay for a coordinator of senior citizen programs*
- *a grant from the Massachusetts Council on Arts and Humanities to provide theatrical programs.*

User fees are a special kind of project fund collected from individual users and applied toward the cost of the program in which they are participating. This is a time-honored method of raising funds for special interest classes and activities and is the only method used in some cases. If enough people enroll to pay for a supervisor, the program runs; if not, it is cancelled. If, by chance, enrollment fees exceed supervisory costs the difference is applied towards other expenses. Fees are usually kept as low as possible to make the program

widely available. Some programs, such as day care programs, charge sliding scale fees.

Subsidized staff salaries from the federal government are critical to many centers. Although these funds are not targeted toward specific programs, many programs depend heavily on staff subsidies.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is the most widely used. Other programs include Work-Study for College students, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the Job Corps.

CETA funds are distributed through cities or other qualified "prime sponsors" for subsidizing public service jobs. A few examples illustrate the importance of staff subsidies to the operation of community school centers.

At the New North Community School in Springfield, Massachusetts, 15 of the 20 parks department employees are paid through CETA. The senior citizens' program is coordinated by a private agency, but the supervisor's salary is paid by CETA. In 1977, the Quincy School in Boston received CETA funds nearly equal to the total direct city allocation ($72,000 vs. $73,000). Centers located near universities can hire students under the federal Work-Study program, which pays most of their salaries.

The requirements of subsidy programs limit either the number of hours worked or the length of employment, which can upset program continuity and frequently requires the center to develop a training program for employees.

Volunteers—the ultimate in subsidized staff

Faculty and students from colleges or universities can provide valuable assistance. A pharmacy in an Atlanta center is operated under the auspices of a nearby college of pharmacy and staffed by student volunteers. In other places, college or graduate students serve internships in health, social work, or recreation. Community residents also run programs. In Baltimore, a number of neighborhood women, many of them certified day care supervisors, volunteer to operate a night-time babysitting service at the Dunbar School for parents taking part in evening activities. Elderly people who participate in programs for themselves also volunteer to help in nursery school or day care centers. Alcoholics Anonymous, which runs a large program in several Boston centers, is also a volunteer organization.

Other kinds of program support include fund-raising events, bake sales, and host of other small scale efforts. Local merchants and industries can be solicited for donations or supplies. Resources are also swapped and bartered between agencies and programs.

Funding maintenance and operation

Maintenance and operation expenses include utilities, normal maintenance for buildings and grounds, and salaries for custodians and security staff.

At community school centers these costs are usually shared by major participants and user groups, one way or another. The money is pooled and responsibility for operation and maintenance work is assumed by the prime user agency, often the school or municipality. Occasionally federal staff subsidies are used, such as at the New North Center where the 11-person security force is paid with CETA funds.

Legal backgrounds Staff laws frequently influence how fees are collected and what they are called. The money may be "rent," it may be "cost sharing," or it may be a "use fee," depending on what the law authorizes and prohibits. Most state laws enable school boards to set regulations and fees for using school facilities. If the facility is owned by the municipality instead of the school board, or a part of it is identified as a "neighborhood facility" or a "community service wing," different state laws apply which may be more liberal.

They may allow services to be exchanged, rather than money. In such a case, for example, a municipal park and recreation department might maintain outdoor areas while the school district maintains indoor areas of shared facilities.

State laws regarding surplus space, whether entire buildings or portions of operating schools, are in a state of flux. However, space that has been officially designated as surplus can usually be rented. Some states require that rents be at a prevailing market rate, others do not. Some prohibit school districts from deriving a profit, others specifically allow it.

Local government laws and financial structures also influence the methods used to share costs. For example, if the school district is fiscally dependent on the local jurisdiction, it may be unnecessary to charge rental or use fees for municipal use. The municipality may simply increase the appropriation to the school district to cover costs of municipal use of facilities. Arlington County in Virginia has adopted a strategy to avoid inflating the county's school budget, and therefore the per pupil costs, by appropriating money to a community activities fund to pay for operation and maintenance of shared facilities.

Rental agreements If major participants have sole use of specific spaces in a center, they usually pay rent to the owner agency. Rental rates are determined on a square foot basis by dividing the total assignable area into the projected or budgeted maintenance and operation cost for the building.* Tenants then pay for the size of the space they occupy. At the end of the year, actual costs are compared with estimated costs and adjustments are incorporated into the next year's rent structure. This method of using "assignable" areas allows the costs for stairways, corridors and other unassigned areas to be prorated among tenants in proportion to the amount of space they rent.

Costs can be manipulated to provide a greater or lesser subsidy to organizations, depending on the degree to which spaces are shared and on spaces that are left unassigned.

For example, in Springfield the gymnasium, arts and crafts room, auditorium, and other areas used for programs run by several community organizations are assigned to the school. These organizations only pay rent on tiny offices in the center, and are thus being subsidized by the school. If, however, the gymnasium was considered an unassigned space, these groups would pay a small portion of the cost of operating the gymnasium. But in that case, the public library, which does not use the gym but rents a large area, would also be paying for the cost of operating the gym.

Whether tenants are asked to pay rent depends on the building owner. For example, the Dunbar high school and center in Baltimore is totally owned by the city. City agencies and departments do not pay rent, but county, state, and federal tenants pay $3.50 a square foot. The school budget, which is funded by the city, is increased to cover the additional operation and maintenance costs attributable to city agencies, and maintenance work is carried out by the schools.

Cost-sharing agreements When agencies do not have exclusive use of any space, rental agreements are inappropriate. Under these conditions, cost-sharing is based on estimates of both time and amount of space used.

The Britannia Centre is a good example. All agencies receiving city funds are lumped together and maintenance and operation costs are prorated between the city and the school board. Time and space estimates are made for community and school use in the nine buildings in the center, and the city pays the community portion.

In this manner a building housing the elementary school, arts and crafts, and family activities areas is rated 10 percent community and 90 percent

*Only rarely does a school district or municipality attempt to recover construction costs through rental agreements, and only in centers located in surplus space are administrative costs included.

Sharing the construction, program, and operating costs between the Arlington (Va.) County's Department of Environmental Affairs and Public Schools allows the recreation center at the Thomas Jefferson Junior High School & Community Center to be used by students, senior citizens, and other members of the community.

school; the building housing the teen center, high school gym, and racquet courts is rated 60 percent community and 40 percent school.

Weekly activity schedules are reviewed annually to compare actual use with the estimate. In three years of operation Britannia has kept to its original estimates. Tradeoffs occur where overuse in one facility is compensated by underuse in another.

Similar rough estimates are used in Atlantic City to share costs among the three sponsoring agencies. However, the school pays for its share and the city's share because the schools are funded by the city. Only Atlantic Human Resources, a quasi-private nonprofit agency, is actually assessed a fee by the school board.

Fees for occasional use Most centers encourage community groups to use general meeting spaces. The fees assessed for occasional use vary among centers, based on the amount of financial support from the school board, city, and tenant agencies.

At Britannia, major users such as universities teaching classes are assessed a fee to cover the cost of utilities and maintenance. Community groups can apply to the school board for free use of space, except for the swimming pool and ice rink, which are rented according to an established park board fee schedule. Fees contribute toward, but do not cover, operating expenses. The school board has a different fee structure for "non-community" use.

Most community group use is free in Atlantic City. A private agency running a daily crafts program for senior citizens has worked out a barter agreement. Since the center cannot legally charge rent, the agency "donates" money which the center uses to buy supplies for other programs. The same agency also uses its fleet of vans to provide free transportation for senior citizens for center activities.

For special events such as banquets, the center provides services at cost. Salaries of school kitchen staff and food costs are passed on to the user group. Fundraising events are also assessed a fee, but that fee supports program, not operating, costs.

In Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and other places, community group use is free if building personnel are already on duty. Since community school centers are usually open about 16 hours a day, most groups can find a vacant space to meet. Otherwise, the group must pay the salary of custodians and engineers. ■

Monitoring a center's evolution

Community school centers are still an evolving institution for which there are no set patterns. Each center has to develop its own configuration of programs, services, participating organizations, organizational structures, staffing, and community use patterns.

The nature of each center will also be evolutionary because, no matter how thorough the planners are, they will not be able to forsee all the results and all the problems. These become obvious only when the center is operating. Also, the population may change, thus changing the nature of community needs. New community organizations may develop and new buildings may be erected, changing the nature of community resources. The political climate may change, accompanied by drastic funding changes. Participating organizations may find that cooperative agreements that looked good on paper do not work well.

Built into the process of managing a center must be a capability for change in all spheres of operation, and a means of evaluating progress.

Questions for evaluating a center

The following sets of questions provide a skeleton on which to build detailed surveys for planning or evaluating a community school center. We have separated the questions into four categories: organizational structure, programs and services, management, and funding.

Organizational structure

- ☐ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations as perceived by participants and outsiders?
- ☐ Will the organizational structure be evaluated periodically? Will the anticipated patterns of operation be compared with the patterns that develop? Will there be flexibility to change the structure when problems become obvious?
- ☐ Are community people still excited, angry, apathetic? Why?
- ☐ Are policies being made and issues discussed by a broad spectrum of people? Is anybody disenfranchised? Has a small group of people taken over? Can this be remedied in the future?
- ☐ How will new groups, agencies, and organizations be accommodated in the organizational structure?
- ☐ Will there be provision to explore alternative organizational structures that may be allowed through changes in state and local laws?
- ☐ Will advisory councils remain active and play a useful role in making decisions?
- ☐ If the coordinator does not fulfill his or her expected functions, will the organizational causes be investigated?
- ☐ If this is a city-wide system, does it reflect the needs of all the communities? Are resources allocated equitably?
- ☐ Will the system be monitored so that potential shifts, such as a tendency to centralization, can be identified? Is the system flexible enough to accommodate changes?

Programs and services

- ☐ Are there mechanisms for monitoring changes in community needs? Will needs and priorities be periodically assessed?
- ☐ Will the administration monitor changes in community resources such as buildings, agencies, community organizations, businesses?
- ☐ Are there gaps in programs and services, or duplication of services, that can be eliminated? How will this be done?
- ☐ Are programs and services offered at convenient times? Are services properly assigned for the needs of night and day users.
- ☐ Will new groups asking to offer programs or use facilities be accommodated in the future?
- ☐ Will service quality be assessed periodically? Will new organizations be allowed to replace

existing services if they can do a better job? Are there mechanisms to guard against organization becoming too entrenched?

- ☐ How much coordination is expected among participants? Is everybody happy with this level, or do people have different expectations? Are there additional opportunities for coordination that ought to be explored after the center is operating?

Management

- ☐ Will the space needs of regular users be periodically evaluated? Can and will the space allocations be changed as needs change?
- ☐ If organizations become unhappy about their space allocation, will there be flexibility to make a different kind of agreement?
- ☐ How will increased demand for regular use be accommodated?
- ☐ Will space use be monitored so that underused spaces can be identified?
- ☐ If demand for space becomes overwhelming, are there other facilities that could be used in coordination with the center?
- ☐ Will non-regular users be able to use the center fully?
- ☐ Are the priorities established for special and periodic use perceived as fair? Will they be evaluated from time to time?
- ☐ Will scheduling practices for shared spaces in high demand meet a variety of needs?
- ☐ Will there be a balance between structured and unstructured uses? Will age groupings or other methods for limiting demand help or hinder community use of facilities?
- ☐ Are planned security measures adequate? Will theft, vandalism, and personal safety be monitored so that changes in security can be made?
- ☐ Do users feel comfortable with security arrangements or do they consider them inadequate or overwhelming?
- ☐ Will center users feel welcome and have little difficulty finding their way around?

Funding

- ☐ Are the costs of the center known, and will they be monitored?
- ☐ Will new federal, state, local, and private sources for funding programs be monitored?
- ☐ Have all means of bartering, exchanging services, etc., been explored?
- ☐ Will volunteers be able to contribute effectively?
- ☐ Will costs be shared equitably? Will users' opinions for cost-sharing be monitored?
- ☐ If regular users become unhappy with cost-sharing methods, will other methods be investigated?
- ☐ Are there ways of stretching existing funds further?
- ☐ Is there enough community support to insure continued public funding?
- ☐ Can all community groups meet the fees charged for occasional use? Will fees be periodically evaluated? ■

PICTURE CREDITS

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